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Virginia Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter

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It's Work Zone Awareness Week!

The importance of warning motorists-and highway workers-about the dangers inherent in work zones is evidenced by the facts.

Fatalities in work zones went up 55 percent nationally between 1997 and 2002. In 2002, there were 1,181 people killed in work zones on U.S. highways, and four out of five of them were motorists. A work zone death occurs every seven hours in the U.S. There were 828 fatalities in 1994. In Virginia, seven people died in work zones in 2002, a statistic too tragic for any year; but in 2003 that

fatal number jumped to 16. Statistics are still preliminary, but you can add to the fatalities about 265 injuries from the 483 crashes in 2003.

What you can do for WZ awareness

During National Work Zone Awareness Week (April 4-10), you may be asking yourself, "How can I participate in this event?" The most important thing you can do is get involved and let your actions be seen and voice be heard. Here are some suggestions:

1. Display an orange ribbon made out of survey tape to your vehicle antenna and ask others to do the same.
2. Burn your vehicle headlights during the day to show your support of the national event.
3. Talk with your friends about the dangers of work zones, reminding them that they need to slow down, pay attention, obey the traffic control devices, and look out for our workers.
4. Wear an orange ribbon during the week. This opens the door to conversations and leads to an opportunity to talk about the week with others.
5. Talk with your employees about the dangers of the job to increase their awareness - remember safe work zones begin with them. Review the Virginia Work Area Protection manual (pdf), VDOT pocket guide, and flagger material (pdf) to ensure current practices are up to date with the latest requirements.
6. Make a contribution to the VDOT Worker's Memorial fund. What better way to honor and remember those who gave their all than providing financial support to complete this project?
7. Examine the traffic control devices (signs, stands, cones, etc.) you use every day to ensure they are compliant and in good working condition and appearance.
8. Go speak at a high school driver's education class on the dangers of traveling through work zones. It means more hearing the message from someone who faces the dangers everyday, than from a teacher who lacks the experience of being in a work zone.

National WZ event April 6

The Springfield Interchange will be the site of a national media event Tuesday, April 6, at 10 a.m. to publicize National Work Zone Awareness Week.

VDOT will join the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) for the occasion. They will promote the theme: "How would you like someone driving through your office?"

A work zone, set up to look like an "office," will be located at the Springfield Interchange, and Mary Peters, FHWA director, will conduct a press conference from behind a desk there. She will be asking motorists to picture someone driving through their office--just as motorists do through highway workers' work areas. VDOT Commissioner Philip Shucet will join her in the news conference. David Hamm, a colleague of James Cameron, a VDOT worker killed in an Alexandria-area work zone last May, will also speak at the event.

The event will emphasize motorists' responsibility to drive responsibly in work zones to protect the lives of highway workers, other motorists and passengers--as well as their own lives. The roadway is a workplace for hundreds of employees who toil, at great risk, to improve and expand the transportation network.

National poster made here

The 2004 poster for National Work Zone Awareness Week was made in Virginia by VDOT employees. In the poster's photo is an "office" set up in a work zone. Occupying the office are Brenda Carter, Mobility Management Division, and Don McNeely, Richmond District Traffic Engineering Section. The setting for the poster was an unopened section of Route 288 in Chesterfield County. The photo was taken by Al Covey from the Audio-Visual Section of the Public Affairs Office. See it at <http://www.virginiadot.org/comtravel/prog-wzsa-default.asp>. The poster will be distributed to state and federal DOT offices nationwide.

Facts about work zones in Virginia

Work Zones are unavoidable. You will encounter one at least every 90 miles in Virginia. Gravel, dirt, mud, sudden changes in pavement and slope, potholes, narrow lanes, debris, harsh lighting, loud noises, big machines and traffic patterns that change from day to day all conspire to distract drivers in work zones. The best thing to do is to slow down, and pay attention to your driving. Put the cell phone away, leave the radio alone and concentrate! You are driving through somebody's work area, and there is no margin for error.

Highway work zones are considered the most hazardous place for workers in the United States, but they can be even more dangerous for motorists. Statistics show that motorists comprise four out of five of all deaths in highway work zones. A 3,500-pound car is no match for a 24,000-pound dump truck.

The Commonwealth of Virginia takes speeding in a highway work zone very seriously. The fine for speeding in a highway work zone is up to \$500.

Work zone engineers see needs and progress

A survey of VDOT work zone coordinators across the state indicates they see both progress in work zone safety as well as dangers still needing to be addressed.

Speeds of motorists in work zones continues to be their greatest concern. "Most motorists seem to exceed the posted speed limits," says Tom Coleman, Northern Virginia District. There are other concerns, however. James Breedon, Culpeper District, cited "disrespect for signing, inattention and speeding." John Sabato, Hampton Roads District, worries because serious accidents can occur anytime lane reductions or traffic stoppages bring traffic to a complete stop in the work area: "Approaching traffic does not expect to come to a complete stop on any roadway." Ginger Quinn, Salem District, advises that danger is inherent not only in the work zone but also in travels to it from offices or shops. A recent accident on I-81, in which a wide-load hit a traffic engineering truck, sent two employees to the hospital.

What encourages the coordinators? Donald Robertson reports that "At the VDOT level, we are making sure the maintenance of traffic plans are useful and constructible." Donnie Smith, Richmond District, is happy about the requirements for crash-worthy temporary traffic control devices, such as traffic barriers, crash cushions, bridge railings, sign and light pole supports, and work zone hardware. Tom Coleman also thinks "the quality and maintenance of the traffic control devices has been improving." Sabato adds that most VDOT crews and some utility companies are doing "a much better job" of using the Virginia Work Area Protection Manual to put in the correct traffic control. Breedon sees improvements from the use of law enforcement officers in the work zones, as well as drone radar and other speed deterrence traffic devices. Quinn is happy about the effort of VDOT and Virginia road builders to visit high schools to make young drivers aware of work zone safety. In addition, state police are cracking down. At the Atlee-Elmont interchange on I-95 north of Richmond, for example, police have issued more than 200 tickets for violations recently.

News Briefs

Hampton Road Employee dies in accident--Paul Thurber, a Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel employee was killed March 18 at the tunnel while crews were working on the lighting. Thurber and another employee, Charles Brinkley, were in the back of the platform truck as it was moving from the Eastbound Tunnel to the Westbound Tunnel. Sitting on a bench in the back of the platform, the men were looking away from the tunnel entrance when their heads hit the tunnel ceiling entrance. Brinkley was taken to the hospital and released after examination. The entire district went into a work stand-down the morning after the fatality as supervisors and employees went over safety procedures and policies.

Thurber was 48 years old and had worked for VDOT for approximately one year. He was employed at the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel and had volunteered to be a member of the Tiger Team to help the HRBT crew get this important job completed.

Reflecting painfully on the death of a member of the VDOT family, acting District Administrator Connie Sorrell said: "This is a horrible tragedy for the Thurber family, all the crew members who were working on this crew and for all of VDOT. I urge you to think about your own safety and the safety of your co-workers every day during every operation to ensure that everyone gets to go home to their family. Nothing at VDOT is any more important than your own personal safety. It takes every person, every day making safety the number one job they have."

Lynch awarded first VDOT Medal for Heroism--Barry Lynch, crewmember, Beach Area Headquarters, Chesterfield Residency, has been awarded the first VDOT Medal of Heroism, an honor recently instituted by the department. The medal was presented with a letter of commendation from Commissioner Shucet.

Lynch was recognized for his actions on Nov. 12, 2003. On that day, Lynch was enroute to a debris removal operation and had just turned onto the Route 150 southbound ramp toward Route 1 in Chesterfield County. At that point, he saw a man engulfed in flames run out of the woods. He pulled over to the side of the road, ran to the man, rolled him on the ground and patted the fire out with his bare hands. Lynch then ran back to the truck, grabbed the fire extinguisher and continued putting out the fire that was burning through the victim's clothes. Lynch's quick response to assist the victim, who was rushed to the hospital with burns to the face and back, saved him from being more severely burned or possibly losing his life.

The Heroism Award was established to recognize extraordinary acts of bravery involving great personal risk under unusual, life-threatening circumstances not within the employee's control, while on or off duty. To learn more about this special recognition, view <http://coweb/recognition/hero.asp> or contact Kellie Bonner, agency recognition coordinator, Human Resources Division.

Equipment team takes top honor--VDOT's Equipment Management Team has earned the inaugural Fleet Masters Award presented by the Association of Equipment Management Professionals and Construction Equipment magazine. The award honors the nation's best public and private fleet equipment managers.

VDOT's equipment program was cited for its Business Process Improvement Plan, which identifies and prioritizes the equipment program's most critical issues. During the past four years, the program has improved its preventive maintenance process, utilization, warranty management and disposal of equipment.

"The most important aspect of our success is teamwork," said Erle Potter, P.E., VDOT's assistant director for equipment management. "We address critical issues agency-wide by efficiently using the talents of our equipment staff. This is done by forming small work groups of equipment staff across the state to address many issues, rather than having everyone address only a few."

VDOT's fleet includes 32,000 pieces of equipment with a replacement value of \$534 million. The equipment ranges from bulldozers and motor graders to chainsaws and weed eaters, and is maintained in 83 VDOT repair shops all over the state. VDOT leads the nation in governmental Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) "Blue Seal" certified shops and has more certified equipment managers than any other fleet in the country.

Staunton Employee Recognized in General Assembly--Randy Vorous, Luray Residency, was recognized by the Virginia House of Delegates on March 11 for extraordinary bravery as he helped rescue a coworker during Hurricane Isabel, in which both men were injured. Vorous and Garland Presgraves were struck by a falling tree Sept. 18 while clearing another tree blocking two lanes of Route 50 near Berryville.

Vorous, although seriously injured, freed himself from the tree, radioed for help, and then cut a path through the tree to Presgraves so an emergency crew could reach the critically injured man. Delegate Beverly J. Sherwood, Winchester, commended Vorous for his actions with House Joint Resolution No. 26. Vorous has recently returned to work on a part-time basis. Presgraves is still recovering from his injuries.

Names in the News

Caywood will lead in Salem

Richard L. Caywood, P.E., resident engineer in Petersburg, has been tapped for Salem District's top post. Caywood succeeds Fred C. Altizer Jr., P.E., who became Interstate 81 program manager and assistant to VDOT's chief engineer in Sept. 2003.

As Salem's district administrator, Caywood will oversee road maintenance, construction and operations for a region of southwest Virginia that includes more than 9,200 miles of roadway, 12 counties and about 1,000 VDOT employees.

Caywood served as Petersburg resident engineer for four years, managing preliminary engineering, construction, land development and maintenance programs there. He worked on the development of the secondary six-year plan and the primary, interstate and urban six-year plan for Prince George and Dinwiddie counties. Construction projects completed in his tenure include the \$30 million Martin Luther King Jr. crossing of the Appomattox River between Petersburg and Colonial Heights. From 1997 until 2000, Caywood was assistant resident engineer in Charlottesville, where he managed preliminary engineering and construction programs. Earlier he was in Salem District where he served as project engineer and developed six-year plans. He was an engineer trainee from 1992 to 1996 in the Salem and Richmond districts. His first job with VDOT was as a summertime construction inspector. He holds a master's degree in civil engineering from Virginia Tech and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Virginia.



Richard Caywood

Salehi is Culpeper administrator

Culpeper District's new leader is Morteza Salehi who comes from the post of assistant district administrator in Northern Virginia. Salehi replaces Robert E. Moore, acting district administrator, who will return to his role as district maintenance engineer.

As Culpeper's district administrator, Salehi will oversee VDOT's transportation program for a nine-county region that includes Warrenton, Charlottesville, Culpeper, and Louisa residencies. The district covers nearly 4,560 of roadway and employs about 700 people.

Salehi has been Northern Virginia's assistant district administrator for maintenance and operations since 1998. In the preceding four years, he was assistant administrator in the same district for maintenance. He joined VDOT, and the Northern Virginia District, as a senior engineer in 1989. From 1985 until 1989, he worked in the private sector. From 1981 until 1985, he was a research associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Before immigrating to the United States, Salehi worked for the government of Iran. He took a leading role in the coordination and development of Iran's transportation programs. Earlier he was an associate professor of civil engineering at Tehran University. Salehi holds a doctorate in transportation engineering and a master's degree in highway and traffic engineering from the University of Birmingham, England, and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Tehran Polytechnic Institute.



Morteza Salehi

Patel promoted to assistant director

Shailendra Patel, P.E., has been promoted to assistant director for the Innovative Project Delivery Division. He will develop policy for design-build projects and provide oversight to Public-Private Transportation Act projects. He also will have administrative responsibilities for the Consultant Coordination Committee.

Patel moves to his new position from the Structure and Bridge Division, where he managed bridge design contracts for the Consultant Services Section.

His VDOT career began as a construction inspector at the Warsaw Residency in 1992. From 1994 to 1998, Patel was a bridge designer at the Richmond and Hampton Roads districts. In 1998, he was promoted to senior structural engineer in the Structure and Bridge Division. Earlier Patel worked briefly with a Maryland general contractor and before that as a project engineer for a structural engineering firm in India. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from M.S. University of Baroda, India.

Garber is construction engineer

Larry C. Garber, P.E., a 30-year VDOT veteran, has been named Culpeper District's construction engineer. He moves from Fredericksburg District where he also was construction engineer.

A 1973 graduate of Virginia Tech, Garber participated in VDOT's co-op program, through which he received an introduction to VDOT jobs and missions across the state. Upon graduation, Garber joined VDOT full time in the Engineer-in-Training Program, with assignments in Harrisonburg Residency, Staunton and Richmond districts and the Central Office.

In 1976 Garber became assistant resident engineer in the Salem residency, remaining in that position until 1983 when he was named resident engineer in the Culpeper Residency. In 1996 Garber was promoted to construction engineer in the Fredericksburg District, where he stayed until his current promotion in Culpeper District.

Berry is L&D assistant administrator

Nancy Berry is a new assistant administrator in the Location and Design Division. She will concentrate on developing appropriate policies, providing support to the districts, and daily management of the division.

Berry, a veteran of 27 years in the division, has worked the past 16 years in the Engineering Services Section and the last seven years as program manager in that section. She managed the development of the Road and Bridge Standards and the Location and Design Policies and Procedures. She also has been a key leader in the development of VDOT's Guardrail Installation Training Program. Berry also has taken a large role in implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act as it relates to design issues. For the past seven years, she served as VDOT's coordinator with the Appalachian Regional Commission in making sure that cost estimates are prepared and monitored in those designated corridors.

Earlier in her career she worked in the Roadway Design, Location Studies, and Public Involvement sections. She has worked with several major department initiatives, including job analyses for engineers, competency models for engineers, and customer service training.

What's new on the Web?

Hampton Roads adds new traffic cameras, variable message signs

Just in time to help motorists making summer travel plans, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has added 80 traffic cameras and 87 overhead variable message signs to its traffic management network in Hampton Roads. The new cameras and signs were switched on in March using a brand new software system, providing a vital communication link between traffic controllers and motorists on the roadway.

The completion of the second piece of a three-phase expansion to the region's network of traffic management technologies gives VDOT's Smart Traffic Center in Virginia Beach a bird's eye view of 31 new miles of the highly traveled interstate system.

The new cameras monitor traffic on:

- I-664 from the north end of the Monitor Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel to the I-64 interchange in Hampton
- The I-64/I-664 interchange in Hampton to the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel
- All of I-56
- I-264 from the Downtown Tunnel (Berkley Bridge) to Parks Avenue in Virginia Beach
- I-64 from the south end of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel to the High Rise Bridge in Chesapeake.

Images from the traffic cameras can be viewed at <http://www.virginiadot.org/comtravel/hroads-main.asp> and on **partnering Web sites**.



Janet Gregory, owner of Big Daddy's, and David Brandt, right of way specialist

VDOter in Profile:

Lynchburg's David Brandt wouldn't quit on Big Daddy's

Danville diner would have been history without right of way agent's persistence

The luncheon special for the day was like many others over the years-salmon cakes with two sides of pinto beans, green beans, turnip greens, creamed potatoes, apples or deviled eggs. But when it comes to the dining environment-how things have changed!

Big Daddy's-that's where we're eating lunch-has been a restaurant, actually an icon, in Danville since 1944. Until a few months ago, nothing much had changed in those decades. The tile-topped, brick shoebox of a building had fit tightly in between North Main Street and Franklin Turnpike just before they merge. Customers had slanted their cars toward the eatery or parked parallel to avoid having their tail-lights clipped off by passing traffic. The close, dark quarters inside permitted a row of homemade wooden booths on one side and a galley with a counter and stools on the other. With no outside venting, a blue haze of grill smoke hung in the air. But change always comes.

For Big Daddy's and its owner, Janet Gregory, change was the Route 265 connector, which will link Route 29 alternate from Danville's inner city with the 265 bypass of the city. Big Daddy's was going to be a target for some big bulldozers.

Enter David Brandt, right of way specialist sr. who balances service to the state and to property owners like a waiter with a platter of baby-back ribs on each shoulder. On the one hand, he explains, "I'm a steward of the state's money, and I'm a salesman who tries to sell the concept of the new road and the department to land or business owners." On the other, "I want to see people treated fairly when their homes are in the way. I also want to keep businesses in business and keep their people employed."

Keeping people employed has weighed on Brandt's mind. "Every time I pick up a newspaper, I see another business is closing in Danville," he reflects. He also wanted VDOT to be seen as a concerned member of the community. In June 2002, Brandt began working the case that would decide Big Daddy's fate. He did not know how arduous an assignment he had. Over 14 months, Brandt tried to work out 11 relocations for Big Daddy's-with no satisfactory outcomes. He was relentless, but continued to be stymied. He could have calculated a settlement with the restaurateur, paid it, and forgotten the case. He didn't.

At that point, a local developer, A. L. Yeatts, a regular at Big Daddy's, told Brandt he had a prime piece of property-only a block from the restaurant-where he could relocate Ms. Gregory. Brandt knew the property but replied its cost was beyond what VDOT could do. Yeatts explained he already had plans for a small strip mall there, and he would modify them to make Big Daddy's an anchor establishment. Eureka!

It was time for more change-a new Big Daddy's-and that required a lot of imagination. While customers craved the owner's chicken salad (she reportedly paid someone \$1,600 for the recipe), spoke lovingly about her hamburgers, and salivated for her pecan pie, the eatery's environment was not for the faint-stomached. Upholstery on seats was shredding. Grease had accumulated behind the stove and some walls were stained brown with it. And without an exhaust vent or fan, smoke from the grill stayed right in the room. "You felt like you were in a deep fry, and you went back to work smelling like a french fry," Brandt recounts.

Nevertheless, imagination did become reality. In a few months, a clean, spacious, bright eating establishment was in operation. Business had quadrupled. The work force had grown from eight to 13. And while the only real asset Ms. Gregory had before was the name "Big Daddy's," now she has a modern, up-to-code-equipped business with an option to purchase it at a later date.

Speaking of Brandt's persistence, Ms. Gregory was "amazed" at his concern. "Everything that you always heard about the state has been terrible. I feel like they've done right by me." She's been delighted with the kitchen's efficiency, the comfortable seating, the new-and old-customer faces, and the preservation of her employees' jobs. Brandt's district appreciated him, too, awarding him the Extra Mile Award for his labors. Over the years he's done about 160 relocations. His work ethic and work habits push him to do his best each time. He says, "There's a lot of drive in me not to give up."—Chuck Armstrong



Big Daddy's before (left) and after (right). (Photos by Trevor Wrayton.)

All in the Family

Bristol District

District Office: About 25 “troop care packages” went to soldiers overseas (and to one soldier in the states) through generous donations by district employees. About 500 pounds of goods and goodies—candy, magazines, books, pens, toiletries, etc.—were purchased, boxed, and mailed by board members of the Employees’ Benefit Association.

Central Office

Asset Management Division: Charles D. Larson, P.E., has earned the designation of project management professional from the Project Management Institute. This certification is considered the project management profession's most respected global credential.

Materials Division: Prakriti K. Das, P.E., and his wife, Swati, have a new baby girl, Ayesha Supriya. He says his daughter is “now my most important project—currently in the design stage with an AD (advertising) date about 20 years from now.”

Mobility Management Division: Steven Hennessee, Highway-Rail Safety Section, has completed the requirements for certification as an Operation Lifesaver presenter. Operation Lifesaver is an international educational program dedicated to ending collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and on railroad rights of way.

Scheduling and Contract Division: Stephen Haynes has moved from the L&D Section in Fredericksburg District to take a new position concentrating on the Project Cost Estimating System, which is used to provide early cost estimates on proposed projects. Haynes was involved in development work of the system while in Fredericksburg.

Structure and Bridge Division: Congratulations to F. M. (Jack) Vorous Jr., eng. tech. III, and his wife, Peggy, on the birth of their granddaughter, Kendal Nichole Vorous, born on March 2; also to Bryan J. Silvis, arch.-eng. I, and his wife, Kristi, on the birth of their daughter, Abigail Grace, born March 8; and to Prasad L. Nallapaneni, arch.-eng. I, and his wife, Mohini, on the birth of their son, Namit Chandra C., born March 12.

Culpeper District

District Office: Welcome to Yvonne Powers as she moves from the Central Office Human Resources Section to become district civil rights manager. Congratulations to Lisa Patterson, environmental engineer sr., on passing the Professional Engineer exam. Crystal Hale, financial specialist in the accounting office, and her husband, P.K., have a baby girl, Naomi Rae.

Warrenton Residency: Ellen Weber, formerly administrative and office specialist at Bealeton AHQ, has been promoted to business manager at the residency.

Lynchburg District

Chatham Residency: Thomas R. Bushley, eng. tech. II, is the father of a new baby girl, Madelyn Grace. Rebecca C. Neal, admin. prog. spec. III, has graduated from Bluefield College with a bachelor's degree in organizational management and

development. Kenneth B. Kitchens has been promoted from operations manager I to II.

District Office: Congratulations to W. David Gardner, buildings and grounds supervisor, and wife, Wanda, on the birth of their son, Zane Kendall. Douglas E. Cates, bridge structure inspector assigned to the Halifax Residency, has earned the Level IV certification from the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies. W. Don Wright, mechanical engineer sr., has earned certification as an equipment manager from the Association of Equipment Management Professionals.

Northern Virginia District

District Office: Jill Guice joins the district as human resources manager. She has worked in a variety of human resource roles for 16 years at the Washington Metropolitan Airport Authority. Tina Curtis, engineer in the Transportation Planning Section, has earned her Professional Engineer's certification.

Retirements

Troy R. Allen, transp. oper. mgr. I, Franklin Residency, 37 years.
R. P. Andleton, land acquisition agent II, Hampton Roads District, 40 years.
Lynwood E. Agee, transp. oper. II, Dillwyn Residency, 25 years.
Wilmer L. Aylor, eng. tech. III, Culpeper Residency, 25 years.
J. C. Barnes, land acquisition agent II, Hampton Roads District, 41 years.
Dorothy F. Bayne, human resource analyst I, Culpeper District, 24 years.
Patricia w. Bauguss, human resources mgr. III, Central Office, 30 years.
Sandra B. Boze, info. tech. spec. III, Information Technology Division, 34 years.
Edmond C. Braxton, transp. oper. II, Williamsburg Residency, 20 years.
P. V. Brewster, eng. tech. III, Tazewell Residency, 30 years.
Garland L. Bunch, equip. repair tech. II, Materials Division, 40 years.
Darrell G. Burke, transp. oper. II, Lebanon Residency, 27 years.
Lloyd W. Carpenter Jr., eng. tech. III, Wytheville Residency, 10 years.
Joe C. Caudill, transp. oper. II, Wytheville Residency, 16 years.
Rita D. Chandler, arch.-eng. mgr. I, Fredericksburg Residency, 9 years.
Chandra A. Clayton, arch.-eng. II, Location and Design Division, 26 years.
Robert L. Clayton, arch.-eng. I, Location and Design Division, 41 years.
Robert H. Connock Jr., arch.-enrg. mgr. II, Culpeper District, 41 years.
Cameron E. Costley Jr., arch.-eng. I, Richmond District, 42 years.
Everett L. Covington Jr., arch.-eng. mgr. II, Richmond District, 39 years.
Glen D. Cox, transp. oper. II, Wytheville Residency, 25 years.
Willie K. Dixon, transp. oper. II, Halifax Residency, 19 years.
Harry T. Ebbert, eng. tech. III, Richmond District Office, 39 years.
Brenda L. Edwards, admin. and office spec. III, Public Affairs Office, 16 years.
Robert C. Edwards II, arch.-eng.mgr. II, Construction Management Division, 35 years.
Helen G. Fenner, admin. spec. II, Fiscal Division, 24 years.
Clinton S. Ford Jr., transp. oper. mgr. I, Fredericksburg District, 29 years.
Horace F. Gentry, transp. oper. II, Fredericksburg Residency, 7 years.
Henry C. Gibson, transp. oper. II, Fairfax Residency, 14 years.
Arleathea H. Glover, arch.-eng. I, Location and Design Division, 33 years.
Maurice B. Green, transp. oper. II, Jonesville Residency, 26 years.
Marcie F. Guthrie, transp. oper. mgr. II, Amelia Residency, 31 years.
Helen L. Hammer, admin. spec. III, South Hill Residency, 31 years.
K. W. Hamrick, transp. oper. II, Edinburg Residency, 33 years.
James W. Hancock, eng. tech. III, South Hill Residency, 40 years.
Terry J. Hilton, eng. tech. III, Jonesville Residency, 16 years.
James F. Huff, eng. tech. III, Right of Way Division, 26 years.
R. H. Hurd, transp. oper. II, Lebanon Residency, 35 years.
Robert M. Hurst, transp. oper. mgr. II, Leesburg Residency, 29 years.
Floyd M. Jarvis, arch.-eng. mgr. I, Chesterfield Residency, 39 years.
W. S. James Jr., transp. oper. II, Bristol District Office, 37 years.
Patsy J. Jenkins, transp. oper. mgr. I, Warrenton Residency, 27 years.
Thomas D. Johns, equip. serv. repair mgr. I, Asset Management Division, 33 years.
Marlin G. Johnstin Jr., eng. tech. III, South Hill Residency, 17 years.

Obituaries

A. Francis Barnette Jr., 67, inspector, Sandston Residency, died Jan. 4; retired in 1995 with 29 years of service.
Charles L. Deal Sr., 91, equip. oper. B, Culpeper Equipment Shop, died Jan. 8; retired in 1975 with 19 years of service.
James L. Garner, 52, eng. tech. III, Materials Section, Salem District, died Feb. 10; he had 16 years of service.
James R. Gillenwaters, 71, carpenter asst., Christiansburg Residency, died Dec. 5; retired in 1994 with 32 years of service.
Alfred J. Hamilton Jr., 72, equip. mechanic A, Lexington Residency, died Nov. 22; had 45 years of service.
Berlie Helmick, 67, equip. oper., Staunton District, died Dec. 18; retired in 1990 with 17 years of service.
Kenneth E. Holliday, 69, wastewater treatment operator, Edinburg Residency, died Dec. 11; retired in 1991 with 25 years of service.
Frank Norris, 77, resident engineer, Christiansburg Residency, died Jan. 19; retired in 1988 with 29 years of service.
Roger Jordan, 64, equip. oper. A, Amherst Residency, died Feb. 27; retired in 1995 with 10 years of service.
Johnnie M. Tucker, 81, equip. oper. B, Appomattox Residency, died Feb. 18; retired in 1987 with 25 years of service.
William B. Winters Jr., 65, construction inspector B, Fairfax Residency, died Jan. 20; retired in 1991 with 32 years of service.
Malcolm Earl Wynn, construction inspector, South Hill Residency, died March 16; retired in 1999 with 39 years of service.

Commissioner Column Safety is our first priority!

By Philip Shucet, VDOT commissioner

Two of us are missing.

We lost James Richard Cameron on May 9, 2003.

And in the early morning minutes of March 18 we lost Paul Thurber.

Two people with families of their own.

Two people part of our VDOT family.

No matter how high we soar with success, the pain of losing an employee stays with us forever.

And it should. It hurts that bad.

I want to be honest with you. As much as it hurts, it also makes me angry. Angry because it doesn't have to happen.

We can't control the reckless acts of other. But each of us can control our own actions.

We can train you. We can tell you how to stay safe. But, you have to do it.

You have to make sure you use your training. You have to do the right thing.

Make a commitment to safety each time you see your reflection in a mirror.

Make a commitment to safety each day before you leave home for work

Make a commitment to safety as you do your job.

And, make a commitment to safety each time you talk to a loved one so you can be around to talk to them again.

You can't think about safety too much. But thinking about it isn't enough. You have to do it.



Leadership Challenge

Three questions about VDOT's future -- and its leaders

By Don Askew, deputy commissioner

Think with me, just for a few minutes, about VDOT's history and about VDOT's future — and perhaps about you.

When I came to work for the department in 1964, building the interstate system was uppermost in our minds. There was no question about our priority in those days, and no lack of focus. A few years later, we were building the arterial system. And once again there was no confusion about where we would concentrate our energies.

Today, our purpose is still to keep Virginia moving, but in that role we do many more tasks than years ago when we were so tightly focused. Our tasks range from anti-terrorism to environmentalism to community involvement to intelligent transportation systems to difficult transportation planning issues.

All of this raises a question: What will Virginia's transportation system look like 30 years from now? And: What will VDOT look like in 30 years? Here's a third question: What will VDOT leaders be like then?

This is where you come into the equation, assuming you have working years ahead of you. I believe that VDOT leaders of the future will be more broadly prepared because of necessity. They will be ready to face a wide set of issues — including a startling upswing in transportation needs as Virginia's demographics burgeon far beyond Northern Virginia or Hampton Roads. VDOT's leaders will certainly need to know as much about people and their behaviors as about concrete and asphalt.

VDOT will have to meet these challenges, and leaders stepping up now must make the right things happen in the agency. I ask you: Are you one of these leaders? If so, let me ask you three very pertinent questions:

One: How will you prepare yourself to be effective for the future you will lead? That will take some thought, perhaps far outside the box. It might or might not mean a degree in engineering. It might mean earning a degree or certificate in business, public administration, planning, or some other field.

Two: How will you make a difference, or how will you become an innovator in the context of VDOT's future? Will you step forward at critical times with the confidence and knowledge to take on assignments that will set you apart as a leader and problem solver?

Three: How will you learn from experienced employees before they retire and take their accumulated knowledge with them? In 1991, the department lost 976 experienced employees through an early retirement program. In 1995, we lost another 1,227 in a program that allowed experienced employees to retire or leave with a severance package. A lot of "know how" left with them. In the next five years we will lose many more to retirement. Your challenge, if you look forward to leading VDOT, is to learn from people who know how to get things done before they are gone. Find your mentors now.

As a district administrator in Culpeper I often presented the "History of Roads in Virginia" as a piece of the new employees' orientation. I'd begin with Jamestown and highlighted all the transportation firsts that occurred in Virginia: first highway legislation, first toll road, first paved road, first trolley system, all the way up to the interstates, the Smart Road and the first integrated Smart Travel Program. And at the end I would ask those in the orientation a two-part question — a question that I now put to you as a prospective VDOT leader: "What will be that next transportation first, and how will you help to achieve it?"

That's the question. Your work's cut out for you.



Don Askew

Best Practices

In Northern Virginia

Snow Operations System streamlines information flow

Northern Virginia District employees have a new tool in their snow fighters' tool kit. This tool doesn't plow roads more quickly, nor does it make the ice melt faster. Instead, it streamlines the flow of information during snow and ice events by using information technology.

Problem: Just over a year ago, the Presidents' Day storm left 20 inches of snow in the district, generating thousands of citizen calls and overwhelming VDOT customer service representatives. Managing large quantities of information and sending it to appropriate maintenance staff was a cumbersome, paper-based process. Melanie Wright, IT manager, knew there had to be a better way, and she asked application programmers Wayne Pigg and Bobbi Geyer to find it.

Assessment: Pigg and Geyer realized that real-time information was essential for the area headquarters to respond promptly to customer calls. That meant information technology had to be incorporated into the business process. With an IT application, priorities could be set for responding to customers calls by viewing data, and those responses could be made more quickly. Their overview of the district's capabilities indicated that a customer-service-tracking database for snow and ice events could be built using available IT and Geographic Information Systems resources.

Solution: They proceeded to develop what has become the Enhanced Snow Operations System (ESOS) with the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team of Tom Phillips, Larry Camp and Shazi Ali. The team suggested showing logged incoming calls in their existing snow operations viewer, an intranet-based map system presenting snow removal progress. Consequently, GIS maps used in the viewer were linked to ESOS. This enabled customer service representatives to communicate via ESOS with the area headquarters staff, who view the maps at their locations.

The ESOS system was designed for easy data entry by customer service representatives. It uses multiple dropdown lists, including one with all VDOT-maintained roads in the district. Information (such as caller's name, phone number, type of problem, date and time) is quickly transferred to the pertinent areas or residencies. Further, streets on the maps now change color based on the number of calls logged, and maintenance personnel can quickly see where trouble spots have developed.

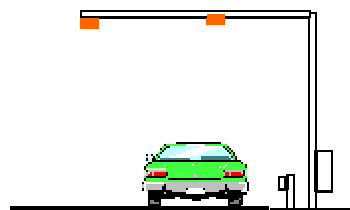


Outcome: During this winter's nine snow and ice events, customer service representatives took more than 3,000 citizen calls and effortlessly notified area headquarters of those calls through ESOS. Customer service representative Tracey Truax says, "It's far more efficient than the way we used to handle calls. It establishes accountability across the board." Patsy Edwards adds, "The system helps us avoid lapses in service." Bob Driscoll, Fairfax County maintenance manager, puts it this way, "ESOS is an amazing leap forward in management effectiveness and customer service. It eliminates triple handling of calls and gives the maintenance area snow fighters a visual indication of problem areas at their own computers." Assistant District Administrator Jo Anne Sorenson observes that ESOS helps the district "stay within snow budget, addresses customer needs, and conveys realistic expectations of the district snow removal program."

The new system also has resulted in a more collaborative effort for all involved in snow removal.

Tech Bytes

‘Smart’ work zone going up in Staunton District



The first traffic management system (TMS) in Virginia specifically for a work zone is coming to Staunton District this spring. It includes a "travel time system" that provides

approaching motorists an estimate of their travel time through the work zone. The TMS offers other benefits as well.

The TMS—also referred to as a “smart work zone”—will be integrated into the replacement of I-81 bridges across the Maury River and Buffalo Creek in Rockbridge County. The “smart” equipment will detect, verify and respond to incidents and backups between exits 180 and 195. Named the Maury River TMS, the system will include cameras, wireless local area network, portable message signs, a safety service patrol, and an emergency wrecker service.

How it works

The travel time system uses license plate readers to clock the time motorists spend in the work zone. The readers have a pair of infrared cameras to record encrypted license plate information from vehicles as they enter and leave the work zone. The system then calculates average travel times through the zone. Travel times will be reported on portable message signs, on the 511 travel information phone line, and on a project Web site to inform motorists about real-time travel conditions. Pictures from the work zone will be available to motorists who access the Web site. With information on work zone conditions, motorists are given the options—before arriving at a work zone—of continuing their trip or stopping for a rest until traffic clears.

The travel time system varies from those in commercially available smart work zones, which offer average speeds of vehicles over distances, not average times from one point to another. Both the Staunton District Smart Traffic Center and the contractor for the I-81 work will use the system in making decisions about managing traffic through the work zone. The TMS is expected to be operational by the end of April.

Another unique feature in this smart work zone is use of a safety service patrol. While VDOT uses patrols for day-to-day operations, this is the first deployment in Virginia associated specifically with a rural interstate construction project. Patrollers will move stalled vehicles out of travel lanes, help motorists with minor repairs, and stay in close communication with emergency tow wreckers. They will work Monday through Saturday from noon to 6 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 9 p.m.

Working with contractors on the smart work zone setup is a VDOT team of Dean Gustafson, ITS program manager; Elliott Asbury, ITS technical supervisor; and Jackie Christian, ITS project engineer. Staunton District will evaluate the system’s effectiveness for use with future interstate construction projects.

Living Our Values

Citizens often express their gratitude for the service, and sometimes the sacrifice, that VDOT employees make for them. Employees also commend their coworkers for excellent customer service. Here is a sampling of the letters, e-mails, and calls that come in appreciation of the good jobs VDOTers do.

Chatham Residency earned the appreciation of Tillman and Shelby Boyd of Ringgold. In a letter to the newspaper, they cited the residency’s response to a 14-inch snow this winter as “outstanding,” adding: “Everyone performed with efficiency and quality. We all understand scheduling problems when you have no control of situations such as the weather. We thought all work was performed on a timely basis. Those men and women who spent long hours at work when most of us were sleeping should be thanked personally by the appropriate authorities.” The writers also noted VDOT’s “excellent work plan,” which it “worked to perfection.”

Warrenton Residency employees earned high praise from Betty and Richard Colgan in the Castleton area. Commenting on work to Route 649, the Colgans cited Steve Mallory, David Clanagan, Thomas Dunn, Paul Grigsby and Jacob Hillman whose work “greatly exceeded” their expectations. They added: “With such excellent and dedicated employees, we know the Virginia taxpayers are receiving maximum value for their dollars.”

Asset Management Division won the administration for two good deeds involving a lost kitten and a lost vehicle. A motorist named Suzanne was “brokenhearted” after her five-month-old orange kitten ran into the woods at the Alberta rest area on I-85, and she had to travel on without it. After sending a distressed e-mail to special operations, Travis Baynes, rest area coordinator, located the kitty and reunited it with the motorist.

In another recent event, a motorist was traveling from New Jersey, where she had bought a car and was returning with her fiancé, who was in another vehicle, to North Carolina. Driving in a snowstorm, they pulled into the Dinwiddie rest area on I-85. She left her car and rode the rest of the way with her fiancé. The next day, at home, she called AAA and the state police in attempt to make sure her car was all right—but she couldn’t remember the name of the rest area where she had left it. She was frantic when she reached Chuck Kostro, VDOT’s special operations director. He found the car, reassured her, and checked later with her about it. The motorist, impressed with Kostro’s concern, wrote, “He is a true public servant with compassion. He’s a fine reflection on the state.”

Culpeper District came through in a pinch when a state senator needed a map of the proposed Route 29 Bypass in Charlottesville. Barbara Reese, chief financial officer, relayed the request at 8:42 on a Friday morning. Creating a simple map from many files was a challenge, but Darryl Shifflet, design project manager in Culpeper, took it—even though the district had been losing power off and on that day. Despite a series of complications, at 3:42 p.m., Shifflet submitted the map on legal-size paper.

Fredericksburg and Richmond Districts did some admirable teamwork after a dump truck, with its bed up, struck a traffic signal mast arm and the pole supporting it. The pole, damaged beyond repair, was at the intersection of routes 1 and 17, one of the busiest points in Fredericksburg District. However, approximately eight hours after the incident was reported, temporary signalization was fully operational—and on one of the coldest days of the year. Making it happen were Fredericksburg District traffic engineering employees, Shawn Beavon, Rusty Brown, Robert Kucinski, Matt Melkerson, Ed Philips, and Scott Pridemore; Fredericksburg bridge section's Tom Miller; Massaponax AHQ's Clayton Gatewood and Bill Huffman; and Richmond traffic signal team members Eugene Moss, Richard Bendle and Mark Terry.

Halifax Residency received written praise from James W. Wagner, director of transportation for the Halifax County Public Schools, for their “outstanding service” to the school’s transportation program. The letter to J. D. Barkley II, resident engineer, recognized the efforts of Assistant Resident Engineer Zack Weddle, Maintenance Operations Manager Donnie Bomar and three area superintendents, J. D. Conner, Teddy Holt and Kenneth Martin. Mr. Wagner concluded: “I wish it were possible for all agencies, private and public, to model themselves after your department. In addition, I have always received courteous and professional helps from the office staff.”

Franklin AHQ's Keith Johnson was praised for prompt customer service by Kendall Edwards of Franklin who needed a driveway pipe installed. After consulting with Johnson, headquarters supervisor, Mr. Edwards described his experience in a letter: “Mr. Johnson went out of his way to treat me well and make me feel as though I was an important customer who was paying a lot of money to have this done. I couldn’t have been more pleased with the whole situation.”

Crater Area Headquarter's Carnell Harper, Petersburg Residency, put himself in harm’s way to help a motorist on I-85 recently. Janita Marshall had pulled onto the interstate and had reached a speed of about 60 mph., when her vehicle’s transmission froze and she came to a stop in a few feet. An 18-wheeler close behind her just missed her truck. She ran to the side of the road about the same time that Harper pulled over. Ms. Marshall writes: “He was so kind and calm-talking, asking details but reassuring me as he put me out of harm’s way into his warm truck, always smiling.” After setting out flares, Ms. Marshall noted that Harper “risked his life several times attempting to move the truck to the side of the road to keep others safe.”

Hillsville Residency got a big pat on the back from Carroll County resident Brita Semones after a recent snowstorm. She writes: “I have noticed the teamwork they have as they drive down the road to tackle the job that lies ahead. Not to mention the hours they work day and night, trying to make our roads safe and passable....Carroll County should be proud of the work that is done!”

Answer File

Work Zone Mobility Facts

What impact do work zones have on highway congestion?

In addition to congestion caused by heavy traffic at daily peak periods of travel, non-recurring events slow traffic as well. About 50 percent of all highway congestion is caused by these events. They are categorized as crashes, weather, breakdowns, and work zones. Here are the facts on work zones:

- Work zones account for nearly 24 percent of non-recurring congestion.
- Work zones cause 482 million hours of delay per year.
- About 20 percent of the National Highway System (NHS) is under construction during the peak summer roadwork season and about seven percent in the winter months.
- The total number of work zones across the U.S. in the summer is estimated at 6,472 with a corresponding loss of capacity of 6,157 lane miles of freeway. Work zones in winter are about one-half of those in the summer.

Another overarching fact is that between 1980 and 2000, highway lane miles increased 2.4 percent while vehicle miles of travel grew by 80 percent.

50 Years Ago

Radar's watching!

Electronic or photographic surveillance for law enforcement has been a hot topic recently. Debate continues over whether to photograph motorists who don't stop for traffic lights while video cameras are used increasingly to watch the movements of people in public places. Experts say the average American is videotaped 12 times per day while going about business.

Fifty years ago, however, radar was the topic. Radar, used for years by the Department of Highways in making speed checks on highways, was about to be used for speed law enforcement. The April 1954 edition of the Highway Bulletin records that innovation. It also relates remarks by State Police Superintendent C. W. Woodson Jr., who asked "for compliance with Virginia's speed limits and acceptance of radar as a necessary means of speed control."

Citizens had concerns about this intruder into their favorite form of transportation. In radar's defense, Superintendent Woodson said that radar should "work strongly against any increase in arrests." The readers might have assumed he meant that motorists would be so intimidated by the device they would give up speeding. The last paragraph of the story indicates that assumption was correct. The Bulletin concludes:

"Radar, said Superintendent Woodson, will serve as a deterrent to would-be fast drivers and will not be used to make 'wholesale arrests.'" We assume that motorists were reassured.

Humor — *It's always close to the centerline (the heart) of VDOT*



Back in January, during a snowstorm, Brian Hubbard, supervisor at Rondo AHQ, got a call from a woman about a dog in a ditch in front of her house in Pittsylvania County. She was very upset because she had called earlier in the week about the dog and no one had come yet to pick up the carcass. Hubbard tried to explain that the snow had kept everyone preoccupied, but his explanation produced no excuse acceptable to the customer.

In response to her fervent pleas, Bill Gammon and David Burgess were dispatched to pick up the dead animal. When they returned, both were laughing heartily. Asked what was so funny, they showed Hubbard the road pickup.



*Farmers' Area Headquarters in Bowling Green
welcomes you.*

(Photos by Tom Saunders)

Virtual Visits

In the Zone with Farmers Area Headquarters

"If I send them out on a job, I know the job is going to be done."

Boe Ferguson is taking time to talk about his maintenance team as he sits in the briefing room of the Farmers Area Headquarters where he is superintendent. The crews are out maintaining the roads, away from his direct supervision, but he is unworried about their performance. He speaks about them with quiet confidence. **Frankie Gouldin**, supervisor at the headquarters, agrees: "They're going to be rolling."

That confidence appeared well placed on a sunny, clear day in late March during a visit by the Bulletin staff. Crews from Farmers, which is next door to Bowling Green Residency in Fredericksburg District, were focused on fixing things up on a primary and a secondary route.

One crew was building up the shoulders on Route 2 a few miles north of the headquarters

near Corbin's Store. Primary route shoulders are not allowed to wear more than three inches below the pavement—and that means maintenance of them about every three months. Today's work zone covered about four lane miles. It required two flaggers, two trucks depositing stone on the travel lane, a motor grader pushing stone into a small ridge just off the edge of the pavement, a loader leveling the ridge, and a roller packing the shoulder. A pilot truck was recently added to the operation to lead motorists through the work zone because some drivers had been cutting in and out of the VDOT vehicles and others were driving too fast.

On Route 626 nearby, two flaggers were protecting a mow-trim vehicle operator, and occasional motorists, as he used the big bush-hog to cut growth on the right of way. The crew members were alert and serious about the quiet work zone near the hamlet of Woodford. Mow-trim operator Truett Jeter Jr. constantly watched approaching traffic in order to slow the powerful blade of his equipment, which can kick chips of brush hard enough to damage cars-or people-50 yards away.

Back in the headquarters, Ferguson explains that Farmers is responsible for 645 lane miles in the northern half of Caroline County, an area that almost surrounds Fort A. P. Hill. On the walls of the headquarters, the Farmers team members represent themselves well with awards and certificates. They have scored no less than 100 percent on snow readiness tests in recent years.

Thinking back to Sept. 18 of last year, Ferguson says, "Isabel put us to the test....It put us into a new league" in terms of demonstrated capability to respond to emergencies. The crews "want this to be an outstanding headquarters," he continues. Capturing the Spring Cleaning Contest title for their area headquarters is another source of their pride. From moving out clutter to combing the property for cigarette butts, they take the contest seriously.

Speaking of contests, Gouldin says, "If our guys see you want to win it, they'll do whatever they have to do to get it for you."

About the Bulletin

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